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***Do Not Trifle With  
A Congressman***

Too many Congressmen own radio and TV stations, have law practices based on their political position, or otherwise have fingers in the pie, to maintain the picture of a dedicated and selfless Congress. Congress obviously has a pretty good opinion of itself and of the value of the individual bodies concerned, because it has showered such loving care on them in the way of baths and other special perquisites. This opinion has been revealed also in the increasing price members of Congress have demanded for their services to their country.

As Edmund Burke said, you can't indict a whole people, and you probably can't indict a Congress, for there are men serving there without greed or self-seeking. But for self-importance one need only cite Wright Patman of Texas, known long before this for his forays into the field of banking and insurance. Mr. Patman's feelings were trifled with, as he puts it, by the Central Intelligence Agency. To get even with the C.I.A. Mr. Patman made public the fact that this secret branch of the government was funneling federal monies into a charitable foundation called the Kaplan Fund. Presumably, from the evidence revealed, the Kaplan Fund was used in part to finance projects sponsored by the C.I.A.

Whether one approves of all the activities of the C.I.A. or not is not pertinent. The fact is that a member of Congress, for no better reason than that his self-importance was pricked, revealed to the public at large — and to our enemies — one of the mechanisms employed by the C.I.A.

There must be several morals involved in this episode. But the one that comes to mind is the old Confucian saying: Wise man does not trifle with a Congressman, particularly if his name is Patman.